

Hull House and The Social Work It Is Doing.

By E. M. Henrotin.

EVERY phase of the social settlement movement has been written and talked up except the club feature, and at Hull House this is a distinct part of the daily curriculum. Miss Jane Addams, who is the head of the house, is a firm believer in the principle of voluntary association. Miss Addams's great fear has been that Hull House would become an institution rather than a home centre for the various neighborhood activities which are there represented. The atmosphere of the house is singularly homelike. It was an old building built by Mr. Hull down on South Halstead street, when he intended it to be an outpost of gentility and to change the neighborhood by building a beautiful residence in the midst of small houses, but circumstances were too strong, and the handsome residence was finally abandoned as the octopus of saloons, pawnshops and tenement houses spread its arms over the neighborhood.

Miss Addams found the house occupied by a manufacturer of doors and windows, and was able to secure the upper portion and one side as a residence for herself, Miss Ella Starr and "Miss Mary." I remember Miss Addams relating that the first night they passed in the house, hearing tales of the dan-



The Cradle Room.

gerous character of the neighborhood, they carefully fastened doors and windows and went to bed in a more or less state of siege. In the morning they found they had forgotten to shut the back door. After this experience, all terrors of the dangerous neighborhood vanished.

In spite of the constant activities going on in the house, it retains the family life. The meals are served promptly, are simple but well cooked, and are dainty. The bedrooms are large and airy, and visitors furnish their rooms as they see fit. There are plenty of beautiful engravings about the halls and living rooms, and the public have been thoughtful in donating the best in art; not always the most expensive, but the best. The house now consists of the original mansion. On one side has been built a wing which contains a station of the Chicago Public Library, and above it a picture gallery. The lower hall of this wing is used for various lectures and the meetings of most of the clubs.

On the right hand side of the house stands the "children's building," in which all that pertains to the life of the children of Hull House is centred; the kindergarten, the creche, the day nursery, the gymnasium, the playground. In the evening the lower rooms are used for the boys' clubs, and from half-past 6 to half-past 7 the Postal Savings Bank is opened and the children bring their money. Nothing can convince these little ones that they will not secure more interest on their deposits by arriving about an hour before the opening of the bank, so that the hall is crowded waiting for the lady who has it in charge to open the door. She never varies a second in the time, as in so large a household it is very necessary to keep punctually to the hours.

A book might be written about the various lectures and occupations which are in progress at Hull House, but I shall speak only of the club feature. There are various musical associations. There is a choral class for grown people and also for children. The children's choral club is under the direction of Mr. William Tomlins, and the club is limited to 300. Most of the children's clubs meet in the afternoon, and the names are not always indicative of the aims of the club. For instance, the Alcott Club has for an object reading and social pleasure, and the American Rose Club pursues the study of art; while the Sweet Violet Club, composed of girls from eight to ten, have sewing and games. The Clara Barton Club, composed of girls from fourteen to sixteen, read short stories. The Little Workers' Club have also sewing, and afterward a game. All these clubs are under directors who are residents of Hull House. The children control the clubs and have a most active voice in their management, but some wise grown-up person always is present at their meetings.

The boys are equally active in club life. The Siegfried Club, the George

Washington Club, the Columbus Club, the Good Fellowship Club and the Boys' Educational Club are all flourishing. The age of the club members is from eight to ten or twelve, and from twelve to sixteen. The Playroom Club meets on Tuesdays at 4 o'clock, and the children have kindergarten games, songs and stories. No child under six or above ten is allowed to join. The present membership is limited to sixty. All these children's clubs are a most important feature of social settlement work.

The Women's Club of Hull House easily leads all the women's clubs of the settlement, as it is the oldest and largest. About 175 women are members, and the club is now five years old, having celebrated the other day its fifth birthday by an evening reception, to which the husbands of the members were invited, and a large birthday cake was made the feature of the occasion. Miss Mary McDowell, who was the founder of the Hull House Women's Club and its president for two years, is now the head of the social settlement of the University of Chicago. The presidents of the club blew out the candles when it was time to cut the cake, and dancing finished the evening. The Women's Club of Hull House has accomplished a great work for the neighborhood in that it has introduced the element of social life. The club meets every Wednesday at 3 o'clock in the large lecture room, and a short address is followed by a discussion, which ends in a social meeting. The meetings are large and enthusiastic, and the greatest freedom of expression and courtesy of debate prevails. In attending the meetings I have been impressed by one feature, which is the strong individuality of the members and their freedom in expressing this individuality. When the women voted in Illinois for a University trustee, all the members of Hull House were actively interested, canvassed their districts and voted.

The club has entertained, also, the various nationalities, having German receptions, French receptions, etc., as the residents in the vicinity are of various races. Their experience in entertaining on an Italian evening was unique. They delivered their invitations to the Italian residents, prepared their room and supper, and awaited their guests. No one appeared. About 8 o'clock one of the women announced that a large crowd of men stood at the door, so the president of the club and Miss Addams went out, and, sure enough, found to their consternation that all of the men of the Italian families had accepted, but only one or two women. They were dressed in their best, and came in, enjoyed the performance, some music and speeches, and the supper



Hull House, Chicago, Founded by Miss Jane Addams. The Leading Institution in the Social Settlement Movement.

hugely. Then a game was started in which they could join, and they were all so delighted and had such a fine time that at half-past 10 or 11, when the hour for adjourning arrived, they could with difficulty be persuaded to leave.

Since this unique party the club has not entertained the Italians.

The club life of this social settlement could easily be imitated by churches, other social settlements and by many organizations. Even by women's clubs. Why could not a club in any neighborhood secure the use of the vestry rooms of a neighboring church, send invitations to the residents around the church whether they belong or not, and repeat one of their old programmes, and thus encourage and foster the social life of the community, for on this broad and wide social life rests the foundation of our intellectual, economic and spiritual well-being as a nation.

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Municipal suffrage in England is not confined, as many suppose, to a few rich women. The property qualification for both sexes is small, and more poor women than rich ones exercise the franchise.

Mrs. M. S. Wade, of Chicago, manufactures the peculiar yellow paper used by the telegraph companies and the press associations, and she has grown wealthy from it. The process of manufacture is a secret which she will not disclose.

A woman in Milpitas, Cal., is said to have invented a novel and effective cure for despondency and kindred evils. She made it a rule to laugh three times a day, with occasion or without, and is now enjoying excellent health and spirits.